

547
A N
E S S A Y

TOWARDS EVIDENCING THE

Divine Original

O F

TYTHES.

By Doctor *DELANY*, Dean of *Down*.

The Substance of it, in a Discourse to
his People, in one of the Parish Churches of
the Deanery lately Rebuilt from a Ruine.

To which is prefixed,

A Short ACCOUNT of some
CIRCUMSTANCES relating to that
DEANERY.

*The Law of the Lord is an undefiled Law, converting
the Soul. The Testimony of the Lord is sure, and
giveth Wisdom unto the simple. Psal. xix. 7.*

*O trust not in Wrong and Robbery! Give not yourselves
unto Vanity. Psal. lxii. 10.*

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ESSAYS

Divine Originals

THE



By Doctor
The Publisher
his People
the Denney family
to which is prefixed

A Short Account of some
of the most remarkable
DEATHS

The first of these is an English lady, who
lived in the reign of King James the first, and
was married to a gentleman of the name of
Owen, who was a great favourite of the king.

THE SECOND OF THESE IS A
GENTLEMAN OF THE NAME OF
Owen, who was a great favourite of the king.

A
NARRATIVE
OF THE
CASE
OF THE
DEAN of DOWN.
WHICH GAVE

Occasion to the following DISCOURSE,
in a LETTER from one of his
Friends to the Editor.

S I R,

HAVING seen the Dean of *Down's* Discourse, called, *An Essay towards evidencing the Divine Original of Tythes*; and perceiving some Passages in it, relating to the

present State of his Deanery ; I resolved to transmit to you, a short Narrative of the Facts, which gave Occasion to that Discourse : And without which, some Parts of it, cannot be clearly intelligible to the Reader.

When Doctor *Delany* first went down to reside at his Deanery ; he was applied to, by great Numbers of the Parishioners, of one of his Parishes, (Dissenters as well as Churchmen) for Leave to rebuild their Church : Which had lain in Ruines, from the great Rebellion. This Request he readily complied with : And applied to the Bishop, for his Consent : Which being obtained, he set the Work on foot, as soon as conveniently could be : And contributed largely to it. Unhappily for him, a Gentleman who had a large Estate in the Parish, and a small Town with a Chapel in it, distant about three Miles from this new Church ; took great Offence at the Dean's Proceedings : And apparently not without Reason. The Presentation of a neighbouring Vicaridge, was in his Gift : And that Vicar, had a Salary of Twenty Pounds a Year, from the preceeding Deans of *Down*, for doing the occasional Duties, of two contiguous Parishes of the Deanery : Without which Aid, the Chapel of his Town, had not sufficient to support a Curate : Having only an Endowment of Twenty-six Pounds a Year.

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This Circumstance, the Dean was entirely a Stranger to : And when he was informed of it, and complained of upon that Head ; he defended himself very naturally, by averring that he had not the least Intention, or Thought, of hurting that Chapel, when he consented to the Building of that Church. And was ready to remedy as far as in him lay, any Inconvenience from it, which he did not foresee. However, that the Care of that Chapel, was no direct, or immediate Concern of his : That he thought himself, only bound to provide, for the publick Worship of God, in his own Parishes. And that it was easy, for that Gentleman, to make a small Addition to the Endowment, of Twenty-six Pounds a Year, purchased (as he hath heard) by the Trustees, of *Queen Anne's* Bounty, for the Support of his Chapel. Nor would it be very extraordinary, if he did so, even from Motives distinct from his regard to Religion. But neither this, nor any Assurance he could give, of the Innocency, and Integrity of his Intentions, could any way appease the Resentment, conceived against him. And yet, that he acted in this Affair, from a pure Principle of Duty, may be clear to every impartial Man, from the Expence he incurred, and the additional Salary he gave, for the Care of those Parishes : More upon the Whole, than the
Double

Double of what any of his Predecessors had ever done. But all this was of no avail. A Petition was solicited, among the Linnen-Weavers of the Deanery, and presented to the Linnen-Board ; complaining, of the great Grievance, of paying one Shilling a Year, to the Dean of *Down*, on account of their Trade ; and thence called Trades-money. Upon presenting this Petition, a Resolution was entered into, by the major Part of the Trustees of the Linnen-Board then present, to support a Law-suit, against the Dean upon that Article, out of the public Fund. Without hearing, or desiring to hear, what the Dean had to say, either against the Petition, (which I believe was founded upon Error) or in Defence of a Right, which his Predecessors had been in Possession of, Time immemorial ; in common with many others of the Northern Clergy ; to whom, it is of much more moment. Upon hearing of this Resolution, the Dean wrote to the Gentleman who is said, to have solicited the Petition ; to desire that a publick Fund, might not be diverted, from its proper Purposes : And to assure him, that he desired nothing more, than that the Suit might be brought to as speedy, and unexpensive an Issue, as possible. And to that End, he offered to bear, one half of the Expence of the Defendant, supported by
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the Linnen-Board, in that Suit ; if the Gentleman who promoted it, and was the Defendant's Landlord, would bear the other. This was silently declined by him, and the Proposal ridiculed as Romantick, by his Friends : And to put their Purpose of persevering, in the Prosecution of the Suit, out of all doubt, they found Means of prevailing upon the Linnen-Board, to ratifie their Resolution of supporting it, against the Dean, out of the publick Fund. Although such a Proceeding, be notoriously illegal ; and the most eminent Lawyers of the Nation, make no Scruple, to declare it to be so.

Notwithstanding all this ill Treatment, and much more that might be recounted ; the Dean, rather than suffer the Chapel before-mentioned, to be shut up, made a voluntary Contribution of Twenty Pounds a Year, for the Support of a Curate, who should officiate in it : And obliged himself, to the Continuance of that Contribution, as long as he should be possessed of the Deanery. Which however, hath no way, abated the evil Disposition, created against him, on account of building his Church : Nor the many vexatious Combinations, that have been entered into (I won't say under what Influence) to distress him, in every Right belonging to his Deanery : Indeed to his great Detriment ; but I verily believe,
to

A Narrative of the Case, &c.

to his much greater Concern, for the Conduct of some Persons, for whom he hath long had, a most sincere Regard, and warm Good-will.

All this calmly, and candidly considered, it is hoped that Gentlemen of all Characters concerned in these unwarrantable Measures, against an innocent Man; will, upon more mature Deliberation, recede from them. Gentlemen in Office under his Majesty, will reflect, how it can become them, to lead the Way in distressing the Clerk, and Patronage of their Sovereign, and Benefactor: A Guardian of the Law, will remember that cool dispassionate Justice, which is the Duty, and Glory of his Station; and will never refuse a candid Re-hearing, upon a just Demand. And all Men of liberal Mind, and Manners, will beware, how they coolly adopt, the Prejudices, and Passions of Men, most innocently, and undesignedly offended: And one might hope, by this Time, sufficiently appeased. And each of them in particular, will, it is hoped, remember, how much Honour they will do their own Characters, by acting upon that fine Maxim, of one of the greatest Genius's of this, or any Age; *That retracting an Error, and repairing an Injury, is in Effect, letting the World see, that you are now a wiser, and a better Man, than you were before.*

PREFACE

T H E

P R E F A C E.

I AM very well satisfied, that there never was, a Period of Time, from the Foundation of the World, in which, a Discourse of this kind, could appear to greater Disadvantage, than the present. For the Time prophefied of, by Saint Paul, is too surely come: The Time when they will not endure sound Doctrine. And yet such is the Power of Truth, that I can never despair of its final Influence. Strong Prejudices have prevailed even against true Religion, and much more against its Teachers; and they unhappily continue, even when the Errors on which they are founded, are removed. For Errors, beget Errors; and the Offspring too often survive the Parent. The Prejudices against the Christian Religion are indeed founded in empty Vanity: But the Prejudices against some of its Teachers, are seldom without some Appearance of Reason. When was the World seen, without some sad Instances of Reproach, and Offence, in that

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Order?

Order ; with which, indiscriminateing Impiety is too apt to insult and asperse the *Whole* ? And is it not too true even of those of a very different Character, that the petulant Prophaneness, of the evil World around them, hath at present driven, too many of them, from sustaining the distinguished Piety of their Characters : Insomuch that they are contented to appear, for the most part, as virtuous and well-bred Seculars are wont to do, meaning to oblige, but I fear more likely to offend, where it is of much more Moment not to offend. Nay so far are they civilized into Secularity, that few of them have the Courage, how much soever they may have it at Heart, to salute you with a Prayer to God in your Behalf ; although it be their proper Business, as it was expressly that of the Levitical Priesthood, To bless, in his Name. And although Prayers of that kind, were the most antient Forms of Salutation, recorded in the Scriptures : And in general, if not universal Use, throughout the antient Heathen, as well as the Christian World. Nay, it is even said, that some of them, forget to beg a Blessing, or return Thanks for their daily Food, in the Name of Jesus Christ ; although that be their only Claim to the Divine Favour. And yet, in many other respects, I do verily believe them, not only as blameless, but also as Praise-worthy a Set of Men, as ever adorned their Dignity. And am well satisfied, that their Honours, and their Income, are always their greatest, and often their only Offence. Although both are confessedly employed, as much to the Glory of God, and the
Good

Good of Mankind, as any other of equal Value in the Nation; and often more.

We are too well assured, that it is impossible, but that Offences must come; but Woe to him, through whom they come! Woe to him, by whose evil Example, as well as to him by whose wanton Calumny, (the Offspring of his Corruption and Envy) the Offices and Characters, of the Christian Ministry are vilified. And indeed it is astonishing to observe, with what peculiar Force Envy operates against them.

A Lay-man, although he should chance to be without Talents, and it may be, not distinguished, by any acquired, or imputed Merit, of any kind; enjoys, (and may they ever do so) all the Felicities of his own Fortune, and all the Acquisitions of his Ancestors, unmolested, unmaligned: Without any degree of that Envy, and Obloquy, which is the sure Lot of the Priesthood, upon the least worldly Success, whether in, or out of their Ministry: Although perhaps after a Series of many Years, employed in the most valuable Practices, and Pursuits; and under the Conduct, of the best improved Capacity, and most enlarged Virtue. But it is our peculiar Fate, and Province, for ever to contend with Error, and Iniquity. And it is indeed necessary it should be so, for the Amendment of the World; and it may be, for our own: That the Man of God (as far as human Frailty will allow) may be perfect, thoroughly furnished, unto all good Works.

Of which, bearing Reproach with Patience, and doing Good for Evil, are not the least. And to compleat the Christian Ministry in their true Character, would to God, they would always remember, that solemn Injunction of St. Paul to Timothy. (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.) I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick, and the Dead, at His appearing, and His Kingdom; preach the Word, be instant in Season, out of Season; rebuke, reprove, exhort, with all long-suffering, and Doctrine.

I am not so singularly ignorant, as not to see, how adverse the Season now seems to be: How contrary the Wind: How loud the Tempest against the Clergy: And how black and louring the Clouds! Insomuch that there be many who very naturally cry out in the Anguish of their Hearts, Who will shew us any good! To which we can only reply, with David's Prayer, Lord, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us. One Gleam from the Eye of God, of that God whose Strength is in the Clouds, can, in a Moment, not only dispel this Gloom, but turn it into Glory, and Gladness; herein is my Rest, and in this Hope will I comfort me.

The Truth is, we too often take the Measures of our Ministry, more from the Dictates of human Prudence, than Christian Piety. We are in the Condition of that too wise, and provident Husbandman, of whom Solomon remarks, He that observeth

The P R E F A C E.

observeth the Wind shall not sowe. Eccles. xi. 4. *Immersed in worldly Wisdom, we forget that the Times, and the Seasons, are in the Hands of God alone. That they are his peculiar Care ; and ours, is only to sowe the good Seed, to persevere, in well-doing. (Gal. vi. 9.) Knowing that in due Season we shall reap, if we faint not. And there is this further Ground of Hope to prevail in the End, that however corrupt the World may be, there are few, so obstinately perverse, as to offend out of malicious Wickedness. And although we may sometimes imagine we have met with some such in the World, and although Men of that Character have forfeited all Title to the Divine Mercy ; yet have they still a Claim to our Charity : and God forbid we should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to inform and to pray for them. Resolving rather with holy Samuel, steadily to teach them (as far as in us lies) the good and the right Way, 1 Sam. xii. 24. And although they should go on still in their Wickedness, yet should we determine, by the Divine Assistance, to go on still, to pray, and to remonstrate against it. God in his Mercy inspire, and enable me to do so, until it shall please him to remove me hence ; (I trust in Christ Jesus) into the Regions of Peace and Immortality, there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest.*

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observed the Wind first not blow, looked at the
 faintest in exactly within, we forget that the
 Times, and the Seasons, are in the Hand of God
 alone. That they are his peculiar Care, and
 ours, is only to fear the good Seed, to persevere
 in sowing, (Gal. vi. 9.) Knowing that in
 due Season we shall reap, if we faint not. And
 there is this further Ground of Hope to prevail
 in the End, that harvest comes the World away
 so, there are few, so obstinate persons, as to
 offend one of our gracious Wickedness. And
 although a way sometimes appears to the poor
 with some such in the World, and although many
 of them have been perished all this is the
 reason why, we have not till a Church to our
 Liberty, we have not till we should be against
 the Lord, is calling to him and to pray for
 them. (Job. xli. 11.) And they shall be
 to reach them (as far as in us lies) and good
 and the right Way, to show them, and
 although they should go on this in their World
 and we should be distressed by the Devil
 assistance, to us as still to pray, and to remain
 in our prayer. God in his Mercy will not
 enable us to do so, until he shall send him to
 remove the Stone. (1 Pet. ii. 12.) And
 the Kingdom of Peace and Liberty, where the
 wicked cease from troubling, and there the
 weary be at rest.

AN ESSAY

Towards Evidencing the

Divine Original

OF

TYTHES.

EXOD. XX. 17.

Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Man-servant, nor his Maid-servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any Thing that is thy Neighbour's.

THESE are the Words of God's Tenth Commandment : In which, the Vice of Avarice is not so properly, and principally prohibited, as the Sin of desiring to become Possessors of another Man's Property, to his Detriment.

Almighty

Almighty God well knew, that without the Establishment of Property in the World, neither could Society long flourish, nor private Families, and Persons, subsist, with Peace and Affluence : And therefore he prohibits the most remote Tendency to the Invasion of another Man's Rights, and Possessions.

He very well knew, that in the order of Nature, secret Likeings and Desires, preceded open Violence, Oppression, and Fraud : And therefore he prohibits all Indulgence in such Desires, as can only terminate in the Injury of others. This is evidently the Appointment, and the Proof of infinite Wisdom, in the Author of this Law ; the prohibiting of Guilt, in its Cause ; in its most remote, secret, and oftentimes unsuspected Tendency.

The Evils of indulging our Desires, to the unjust Attainment of their Purposes, in the particular Instances laid down in the Text, are sufficiently obvious ; and have been abundantly set forth, with all their Aggravations, and sad Consequences, in many learned and excellent Discourses, throughout all Ages : But there is one Instance, wherein the Evil of this Indulgence hath been less noticed, and consequently more over-looked ; although the Consequences of such Indulgence, are, in Reality more fatal, and much more dreadful, than in any other Instance whatsoever : I mean, the coveting of that Portion of their Neighbours Property which is set apart for the Support of true Religion in the World. And that the Consequences of this coveting are more dreadful is evident from this plain Reason among many others ; that it tends directly to destroy all true Religion from the Earth : without which, all the other Prohibitions in the Text, would be of no Effect.

I beseech you Brethren to hear me upon this Head, with Christian Patience and Candor.

That

That *the Earth is the Lords and the Fulness thereof*, needs no Proof, to any Man, that believes him to be the Creator, and Governour of it. That we are, with regard to one another, Proprietors of such Portions of the Earth and its Productions, as he hath been pleased to confer upon us, is out of all doubt : But that we are, at the same Time, but *Stewards* only, and Tenants at Will, with regard to our Gracious Sovereign, and Benefactor, is clear from the Reason and Nature of the Thing, as well as the Authority of Scripture. That it was for the Benefit of Mankind, from the Foundation of the World, to have a strong and constant Sense of their Dependence upon God, upon a Being of almighty Power, and infinite Wisdom, is evident to a Demonstration : Consequently, that the enjoining and requiring such constant Marks and Proofs of their Dependence, was a necessary Consequence from the Wisdom and Bignity of their Maker. And that he did require such Marks and Proofs of their Dependence, is clear from the History of the Creation. *Adam* was limited in his Dominion of the Creatures, by the Prohibition of a particular Fruit : And *Cain*, and *Abel*, brought Sacrifices of the *Fruits of their Grounds, and Firstlings* of their Flocks to the Altar of God : (doubtless by Divine Command *). And the subsequent Histories of the World, clearly evince, that God reserved a Tenth Part of the annual Produce of the Earth (exclusive of Sacrifices) for the constant and regular Support of Religion, in it. Let me again repeat my Request to you, to hear me upon this Head with Christian Candor.

My Brethren, when I exhort you to hear me, upon this Subject, I mean only to exhort you to hear the Voice of Reason, to hear the Word of God, to listen to the Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists of Jesus Christ : To listen carefully to Jesus Christ himself,

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* See *Revelat. examined* ; B. 1. Disert. 8.

himself, pronouncing upon the Point: And remember, that the Trouble of doing so is but short and small: And the Consequences of doing otherwise may be sad, and lasting.

Will a Man rob God? saith the Prophet *Malachi*, iii. 8. *Yet ye have robbed me*, saith the Lord, by his Prophet. *But ye say wherein have we robbed thee?* To this the Prophet answers, from the Mouth of God, *in Tythes and Offerings. Ye are cursed with a Curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole Nation.*

My Brethren, Tythes and Offerings are a Chiefry, which God hath reserved upon all Lands, from the Foundation of the World. He well knew, that without the Belief and Practice of true Religion, Mankind could be neither happy in this World, nor in the next; and therefore he made a proper Provision for the Support of it, from the Foundation of the World; by the Appointment of Tythes and Offerings. Now, that they were so appointed, appears clearly from the uniform Practice of all Mankind, in this Point, throughout all Ages, and Nations of the World, where History leads us into the Light of Truth. For how all Mankind could agree in offering Sacrifices, and also agree in this fixed Proportion; agree in giving a Tenth of their Substance, neither more nor less, to the Support of Religion, is utterly inconceivable; otherwise, than from the Influence of one universal Authority, obliging them all to it; and that could be no other, than the Authority of Almighty God. And this is an Argument, which appears to me, so clear, and convincing, that I call upon the whole infidel World to confute it. I mean to confute it, by the Force of calm, and clear Argument. Railing and Ridicule, (however applauded and practised in a libertine Age) carry no Conviction to a reasonable Being: Nor evince any Thing, but the Impotence

of the Authors, and their Deficiency in nobler Talents.

Another Argument for the Divine Origine of Tythes, may be drawn from the infinite Wisdom of that Appointment : Which, considered in every Light, clearly appears to be every way worthy of God.

In the first Place, Tythes are such a Means of supporting Religion, as can never fail or vary. If the People have Plenty, the Priest hath Plenty of course, from the tenth Part of the annual Produce of the Earth : If the People have Scarcity, he must feel that Scarcity, as well as they : His Condition bears one, even, uniform relation to theirs : And must do so, to the End of the World. Enriched, and impoverished, in proportion to the Condition of his People ; by which Means, the Teacher of true Religion, is placed in that middle State of Life, wherein true Happiness is best attained in this World : and is, at the same Time, the State best fitted to make a rational Provision for the Happiness of Heaven. He is not in a Condition, to be greatly oppressed by his People, in the ordinary course of Things ; and when he is, he is submitted to a Trial of Patience, which, well exercised, makes his Life more exemplary, and useful. On the other Hand ; he is far from being enabled, or laid under any Temptation to oppress them. Now if the Instruction of Mankind in the Knowledge and Practice of true Religion, be a Purpose worthy of infinite Wisdom and Goodness, then the Support of those set apart for this Instruction, in one, even, permanent, uniform Manner, in a Manner that freed them from the Anxiety of providing the Necessaries of Life for themselves and their Families, and by that Means, left them more at Liberty to attend the great Duties of their Profession ; in a manner, that

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established an inseperable Union of their Interest with that of their People, and in that middle State, best fitted for the Attainment of all the Ends, for which true Religion is calculated ; was also equally worthy of that Wisdom and that Goodness.

If any one think this Argument inconclusive, it is his to shew, that a different, or a contrary Conduct, the making no Provision for the Support of Religion, or provideing for it in some other Way, would better become the Wisdom and Goodness of the great Governor of the World*.

The great Wisdom of this Appointment will further appear, when considered in another Light ; in as much as Tythes are a Means of supporting the Teachers of true Religion, which neither is, nor can be, in any degree expensive or burthensome to any of the People. This is as clear as the Sun. The Right of the Clergy to Tythes, is prior to the Right that any Man, or Family in the World can claim to their Estate of Inheritance. Every Man that purchaseth Land subject to Tythes, purchaseth it as subject to that Chiefry ; and pays so much the less for it, on that Score. And every Man that purchaseth Land, which the sacrilegious Impiety of human Laws hath exempted from Tythes, pays so much the more for it, upon that Score. So likewise every Tenant that takes Land subject to Tythes, pays so much the less Rent for it, on that Account. And if he takes Land freed from Tythes, he pays the

* From what hath been here laid down, concerning the Nature and Intention of Tythes, it is a clear Consequence, that all Schemes for establishing any Modus, or Money-Composition in lieu of them, are, in their direct and natural Tendency, destructive of the great Purposes of Providence in appointing a proper Support for the Ministers of Religion. Inasmuch as every such Modus for Prædial Tythes, so far removes the Maintenance of the Clergy from its only sure and solid Basis ; and rests it, upon the fluctuating Foundations of Chance, and Caprice, and the artificial, unabiding Value of Coin.

the Landlord as much more Rent, as they are worth, at least. So that neither Landlord, nor Tenant, contribute one Mite towards the Maintenance of the Clergy, by the Payment of Tythes. They are maintained by that Chiefry, which God hath reserved upon all Lands, from the Creation, (antecedent to all private Property) for the Support of true Religion in the World. So that they never were, nor are, nor can be, a Burthen to any human Creature, upon the Face of the Earth. And this being incontestibly the case, is it not amazeing to think, how the Hypocrisy, Fanaticism, and abandoned Effrontery of some Men amongst us, should so far, and so grossly delude the World, as to make a great Part of Mankind, believe this Institution to be insufferably grievous, and oppressive. Nay not only so, but to be wicked, abominable, and Antichristian! and utterly abhorrent from all the great Ends and Purposes of true Religion. Whereas the direct contrary to all this, is clear to a Demonstration. Nay the infinite Wisdom of this Appointment appears clearly from hence; that Tythes are not, cannot be a Grievance to any honest Man in the World. My Brethren, your Parson can neither aggrieve, nor oppress you, in the Payment of Tythes: Your Lay-Landlord, (for ought I know) may. You all know full well, that if you cannot agree with your Parson, for his Tenth of the Produce of your Grounds, you have nothing to do, but to give him fair Notice, and leave it in the Field. And what can be a clearer Proof, or fairer Character of the Divine Original of Tythes, than that they are such a Means of supporting true Religion in the World, as the People cannot be oppressed in paying. And after all this, *Will a Man rob God?* And what is the Consequence? Ask the Prophet *Malachi*, and he will tell you (Ch. iii. ver. 9.) from the Mouth of God himself: *Ye are cursed with a Curse,*

Curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole Nation.

My Brethren, do you not see, do you not feel your Nation, to be under the Curse of God? Have any seven Years passed, within the Memory of most of you, wherein this Land hath not been infested with a Famine, and the Calamities attending it; the Misery, and Mortality of Man and Beast? Look back, and see how many you can count in the small Interval from the Year 1725! And what can be conceived more equitable, more righteous, in the Dispensations of Providence, than these Chastisements? You withhold from God, his Priests, and the Servants of his Church, as far as in you lies, every Right, every Offering due to them; and he withholds his Blessing from you. You defraud, and you oppress in the Payment of his Chiefry, his Tenth of the Produce of your Ground; and he curseth the other nine Parts, he curseth the Ground for your sakes. O, my Brethren, look back with Humility and Attention, upon your Condition for some past Years, and you will find that you have been but too truly cursed of God. *Cursed have you been in the City, and cursed in the Field: Cursed in your Basket and your Store. Cursed in the Fruit of your Body, and the Fruit of your Land: The Increase of your Kine, and the Flocks of your Sheep.* And will you yet contend with God? Will you harden yourselves against him who is *wise in Heart and mighty in Strength; who commandeth the Sun and it shineth not, and sealeth up the Stars?* Will you contend with him? God forbid. *Who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered!* Job. ix.

My Brethren, we have lately, very lately but too well experienced the Wrath and Vengeance of God upon this great, crying, national Guilt; although not on this alone. In the Name of Jesus Christ,

entitle

entitle yourselves from this Moment, to his Blessings upon the contrary Conduct.

I forbear to cumber you with Quotations from the Old Testament, upon this Head; and shall only beg your Attention to two sacred Writers, who were neither Priests nor Bigots. Hear the wisest of Men upon this Point. *Prov. iii. 9. Honour the Lord with thy Substance, and with the first Fruits of all thine Increase. So shall thy Barns be filled with Plenty, and thy Presses shall burst out with new Wine.* Hear also what the Prophet *Malachi* saith upon this Head, from the Mouth of God to his own People. (*Mal. iii. 10, &c. Bring ye all the Tythes into the Store-house, that there may be Meat in mine House, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the Windows of Heaven, and pour you out a Blessing, that there shall not be Room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the Devourer for your Sakes: and he shall not destroy the Fruits of your Ground: neither shall your Vine cast forth her Fruit before the Time in the Field, saith the Lord of Hosts: and all Nations shall call you Blessed: for ye shall be a delightful Land, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

My Brethren, is it not well worth your while to bring this Matter to the Proof? Is the Lord's Hand shortned? Can He not open the Windows of Heaven, can He not pour down Blessings upon the Earth? can He not fill your Barns at this Day, as well as in the Days of *Solomon* and *Malachi*?

To this it may be objected, that we have, of late Years, been frequently blessed with fruitful Seasons, (as we are at present) notwithstanding this supposed National Guilt: and therefore if we are to infer God's Displeasure from the Curse of bad Seasons, we may infer His Reconcilement from the Blessings of such, are salutary and fruitful.

To this I answer, that God takes two Methods of drawing Us to our Duty; Severity and Goodness.

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When the Heathen World walked in every wicked Way that could offend God, St. Paul tells us (*Acts* xiv. 17.) that, *Nevertheless God left not himself without Witness in that He did Good, and gave us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons.* Are we to infer His Reconcilement to all their Abominations from this unmerited Benignity and Bounty? God forbid. His Benignity and Bounty are congenial to Him; his Chastisements are extorted: and when our Sins have forced them from Him, he returns in all the Divinity of his Goodness, to soften, and melt us into Love and Duty. *And thinkest thou this, O Man, that thou who doest the same Things shalt escape the Judgement of God? or despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness and Forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance?*

My Brethren, Ye all profess your selves serious Christians, and I do verily believe that many of you are so: In the Name of Jesus Christ, walk worthy of your Profession: and suffer not your selves to be deluded to your eternal Ruin, *by the crafty Wiliness of Men lying in wait to deceive!* Men who are as sure, as cruel Enemies to your Salvation, as they are to our *Sion*.

Ye have all renounced the Errors of *Rome*; in the Name of God will ye renounce the Original, the divine Support of all true Religion together with those Errors? *Thou that abhorrest Idols, doest thou commit Sacrilege?* Rom. ii. 22.

But here it may be objected, that Tythes are no where enjoined by the Christian Religion, and therefore Christians are not obliged to pay them. But to this it is easy to answer, that they are no where prohibited by the Christian Religion, and therefore the Obligation to the Payment of them, is still in Force.

How

How greatly were it to be wished, that Christians would consider more attentively than they are wont to do, how far the Christian Dispensation hath repealed the *Mosaick*: No further surely, than merely as the *Mosaick* was calculated to keep the *Jews* a separate People, and to keep them in a constant Practice of such Rites and Ceremonies as were Types and Shadows of the *Messiah*, and his Kingdom; and Tythes surely can come under none of these Heads. The Payment of them, was Coæval with the World; and in Practice with every Nation under Heaven, long before the *Mosaick* Institution: And the Obligation to the Payment of them, as strong upon us at this Day, as the Observance of the Sabbath. And for Reasons, as clear and convincing. An adequate and permanent Provision for the Ministers of true Religion, being as essential, as absolutely necessary to the Existence of it in the World, as the setting apart certain stated Times for discharging the great and fundamental Offices of it: And therefore the Obligation to the Payment of Tythes, is, from the Nature and Reason of the Thing, as strong upon us, at this Day, as the Obligation to the Observance of the Sabbath.

If there be such a Thing as natural Religion in the World, the Duty of contributing to the Support of God's pure and publick Worship in the Society, is most undoubtedly one of its first, and plainest Principles. * And it is impossible to imagine, that any

* I wish those Gentlemen who set themselves in such violent Opposition to the Payment of personal Tythes, or some small Composition in lieu of them, would candidly consider how they can do so, consistently with this Principle: For my own Part I own it is utterly inconceivable to me, how a Contribution of one Shilling a Year, (that is, less than one Farthing a Week) out of the Gains of a good Trade, to so excellent and important a Purpose, can be deemed a Grievance, and an Oppression. And I am
satisfied,

any of the Converts to Christianity, could think themselves acquitted of this Obligation, by that Institution. They had all been Heathens, or Jews, before their Conversion; and as such, well acquainted with the Duty and Practice of paying Tythes: And can it be imagined that they thought themselves less bound to this Duty and Practice, after their Conversion? This is certain, that the first Converts to Christianity laid their whole Fortunes at the Feet of the Apostles; and can it be imagined that they could refuse them a Tenth for their Support, to whom they submitted their whole Substance? And it is clear from Ecclesiastical History, that this Way of thinking continued long after, among the primitive Christians: Insomuch, that the most learned Enemies to the Divine Original of Tythes, are forced to confess, that the Christians of the earlier Ages, contributed much more than the Tenth of their whole earthly Substance to the Support of the Teachers of the Gospel.

St.

satisfied, that the bare Suggestion of such a Complaint, would have shocked a Heathen of any Age from the Foundation of the World, but this.

But it is objected, that they who are called upon to pay personal Tythes, or some Composition in lieu of them, are often such as have paid Prædial Tythes before; and it were hard to load them with both. To this I answer, what hath before been fully proved, that no Man contributes one Mite to the Maintenance of the Clergy by the Payment of Prædial Tythes; and therefore what colour of Reason can there be, why Men should contribute nothing to the Support of true Religion in the Society, from the Profits of a gainful Trade? How strangely do we forget, that without Religion; Rapine, and Violence would take Place of Peace, and Property, and Commerce.

Shall a Man pay Tythes, in proportion as God hath blessed the Fruits of his Field, and pay nothing from the Fruits of his Industry, in Trade; and the Blessing of God upon it! forgetting, that it is the Blessing of the Lord, which maketh rich. Prov. x. 22. Have we no Returns to make, for the invaluable Gifts of Health, and Strength; without which, the best Purposes of Industry, will be fruitless to ourselves, and Families. Even the Heathen grudged not, to make frequent Sacrifices, to the God of Health.

St. Paul in many Passages of his Epistles strongly asserts the Right of the Christian Ministry to a Support from their Ministry : And in the Ninth Chapt. of his 1 Ep. Cor. clearly asserts their Right to such a Support, as the *Jewish* Priesthood were intitled to, from their officiateing in the Temple. *Do ye not know, that they who minister about holy Things, live of the Things of the Temple. And they which wait at the Altar, are partakers with the Altar: Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.*

Now if this Passage is not to be so understood, that the Christian Priesthood should subsist by the Gospel, as the *Jewish* Priesthood did by the Law, the Words are not interpreted in their most natural and obvious Meaning.

But suppose them to mean only that the Christian Ministry are entitl'd to an equivalent Support ; (and then the Practice of the primitive Christians will be their best Comment) let that be found out, and I am satisfied : But I would ask any candid Man, that contended for this Interpretation ; upon what Principles, he could allow himself to swerve from the Example of God in this Point ; suppos'ing he could find out such an Equivalent ? For my own Part, I have ever understood, that the Example of God, in all Points wherein he is imitable by us, consistently with the Obligations of his own Laws upon us, was, not only our indispensable Duty, but also our surest Guidance. And he must have a most amazing Stock of what I should in myself deem prophane and profligate Vanity, who thinks himself capable of devising a wiser, or a better.

I own, that neither that Apostle, nor any of the early Teachers of Christianity, either were, or wished to be (as far as we know) possess'd of the Tythes ; and that such an Attempt, before their Doctrine, and Claim, were sufficiently evidenced to the World,

would be absurd, injurious, and destructive of the Purposes of their Mission! But how this could bar, impair, or alter either the Right of their Successors, or the Divine Ordinance, when the Religion of Jesus was every where received, I believe the Adversary can as little explain, as I can imagine.

But it is objected, that in that Case, the Ministers of the Gospel are mercenary Hirelings: Whereas the Dispensation of such a Blessing among Mankind, ought to be free; and proceed only from Motives of Conscience, and Duty towards God. And it is inconceivable to think what infinite Reproach, and endless Abuse have been vended against the Ministry of the established Church, upon this Head! But the Truth is, they have been vended, either by subtle, and designing Hypocrites, or by weak Men, who have little Knowledge either of their own Nature, or the Ways of God with Mankind. Nothing is more obvious, than that Rewards and Punishments, are the great Engines by which God governs the World. That every Act of Duty is attended with Rewards of some kind or other, even in this World: And therefore to impeach any Man in the Discharge of any Duty, because the Discharge of it is attended with certain Rewards, is to impeach the Appointments of Providence. And more particularly so, where the Rewards are fixed and determined by his own Appointment: As they are in the present Case. The sole Point that will bear any Scrutiny upon this Head, is, whether the Duties, to which those Rewards are annexed, be discharged with a good Conscience, and upon the Principle of paying a religious Obedience to the Divine Commands? This is evidently *St. Paul's* Way of thinking: (for however distressed the Christian Ministry was at that Time) He claims the Reward of preaching the Gospel, as a just Debt: Nor was it with him a just Objection either against this, or any other Part of Godliness, but

but quite the contrary ; a right and a reasonable Motive, that it *is profitable unto all Things, having the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.* And this, to me, is so clear and incontestable, that I should deem it but mere mispent Time, to refute the specious, and hypocritical Vanities, urged on the other Side.

I am very sensible how liable all that I have now said upon this Subject, may be to libertine Cavils : And how obvious it is to object, that all the Arguments urged in Favour of the Divine Original of Tythes, are urged from Motives of Self-interest.

To this I beg Leave to answer, that it matters not whence they are urged, but how they are founded. There is no moral or religious Truth in the World, in the Establishment of which, great Numbers of Mankind are not greatly interested : And yet their being so, was never yet deemed an Argument of any Moment, to impeach those Truths. The single Point in Question, is, whether they are sufficiently supported by Reason, and Evidence : And therefore I earnestly beseech you, to do here, as in all other Cases, weigh the Evidence, and that only.

My Brethren, this is the first Opportunity I ever had of declaring the Will of God to you, or explaining his Word ; and it may be the last : And God forbid that I should take this only Opportunity, of *handling the Word of God deceitfully.* And I appeal to him, and so may he bless me in this World, and in the next, as I have pressed this Duty upon you, with Integrity and Singleness of Heart, and the Conviction of my own Conscience.

I beseech you my Brethren, to bear with me, for a few Moments. Bear with my Infirmities, and allow me to tell you, that I have a Right to be in some Degree, confided in, on this Occasion ; at least if you believe me, to be of a Character, equally
abhorrent

abhorrent from Avarice, and Hypocrisy. I am far advanced in Life; I have no Fortune to make, or Family to provide for; and if merely my own personal Interest were concerned in the Point, although there were no such thing as Tythes in the World, I bless God, I could live then, as well as I do now. I could live as well, but perhaps there are some few others who could not live at all.

My Brethren, I do verily believe, that most good Clergymen consider themselves, in some measure as Almoners of Providence, for the Relief of every social Distress! and the Time is not long lapsed, since many of them were owned to be so) what every Man's private Charities are, that resteth only between God and his own Conscience; his publick Benefactions other Men can judge of. For my own Part, God knows I have too little to say on either Head: Thus much however I may say, because there are some present who know the Truth of it: That the Oppressions which have pursued my Station, have apparently hurted the Poor of these Parishes, in some Emoluments; which, however inconsiderable in themselves, were of some Importance to them. Might we indulge ourselves, in so strange an Imagination, as to suppose a Clergyman, who devoted a certain Portion of his Income to Charity, oppressed, and harrassed, in consequence of an exemplary Act of Duty; promoting, for Instance, and provideing, for the publick Worship of God, in his District; pursued with illegal Vexations, under colour of relieving, certain poor Tradesmen, from the Grievance of a small Contribution, towards supporting that publick Worship; could we suppose this, might he not be allowed thus honestly to expostulate with his People, upon the Point? Alas my Brethren, they who have entered into illegal Engagements to oppress the Pastor, in the Perception of his Rights, under colour of relieving poor Tradesmen, (as they call them)

them) have in Fact distressed the real Poor ; Tradesmen as well as others. They have not so properly hurted me, as they have hurted those, who are much more Objects of Compassion, than Cruelty ! I retract, they have hurted me : They have, as far as in them lay, deprived me of the greatest Felicity human Nature is capable of : The Felicity of doing Good, the Delight of relieving Distress ; and obeying the Divine Commands in doing so ! But there is one Happiness, of which they cannot deprive me ; the Happiness of seeing you all assembled here to serve God : And the solid Satisfaction, of having contributed my Mite, towards the Establishment of his publick Worship, in this Place. He best knows, whether that be not the true Source of all the Vexations, that have harrassed my Station, since my attaining to it ; But be that, or whatever else the Cause, God, in his infinite Mercy, forgive the Authors ; and turn their Hearts,

To return.

My Brethren, I do solemnly aver, that Tythes, have, to the best of my Judgement, as many, and as plain Marks, Characters, and Proofs, internal, and external, of their Divine Original, as they could well be wished, or reasonably required to have, in order to create an universal Conviction of their Original, among Mankind : They are as old as the Creation ; (for First-Fruits [which are Tythes] both of Animals and Vegetables are confessedly so) and therefore God only is their Author. They are a Means, and appointed for Ends, worthy of infinite Wisdom, and Goodness ! They are a permanent, equal, uniform, unexpensive, and unoppressive Support of the Ministers of true Religion ; bearing one even, and unvarying relation to the Condition of their People, and inseparably connected with it. For ever guarding against all Temptations, either to Pride or Oppression on the one hand, or servile Dependence,

Dependence, and base Compliances on the other. Best answering the Purposes of that wise Prayer of *Agur*, (Prov. xxx. 8.) *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches*, and securing all the Advantages of that middle State of Life, best fitted for all the virtuous and valuable Felicities both of this World and the next. And they are confessedly God's own Appointment to his own peculiar People; under the most solemn Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments: And as such, our surest Guide, and Rule of Duty. And therefore it is no Wonder if this Institution hath had its Influence in all Nations and Ages of the World, both upon the worst Men, as well as upon the wisest and the best.

My Brethren, the worst Men paid Tythes and Offerings, contributed to the Support of Religion, from the Foundation of the World, as well as the wisest, and the best: *Cain* brought his Offerings to the Altar, as well as *Abel*. The wild *Arabians* paid Tythes, as well as *Abraham*, the Friend of God. The antient, wise, and well instituted *Persians*, paid Tythes, as well as the polished *Gracians*. The cruel, and wicked *Cartbagenians* paid Tythes, as well as the religious *Romans*. The vile Hypocrite in the Gospel gave Tythes of all that he possessed, as well as the Patriarch *Jacob*. And *Jacob's* Vow to God is surely very remarkable, (*Gen. xxviii. 22.*) *Of all that thou, shalt give me, I will surely give the Tenth to thee.* His Tenth was not confined to the Produce of his Grounds, or the Offspring of his Flocks and Herds, but extended to every Gain God should enable him to make: As his Father *Abraham's* did to the Tenth even of the Spoils of War *.

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* Nothing is more remarkable, than that all Heathen Nations of which we have any good Account, paid the Tenths of the Spoils of War, to the Support of Religion. The most natural Account of which Practice seems to be this. That when any Country

In the last Place, the very *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, although they *passed over Judgment*, and the Love of God, yet were they so exact and conscientious in this Point, that they *tytbed even Mint, and Rue, and all manner of Herbs*; and our blessed Saviour bears them Witness, that they did so. (*Luke xi. 42.*) And doth he reprove them upon this Head? Quite otherwise; he applauds them; and pronounceth it their Duty so to do: *These ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

To sum up all: My Brethren, as you dread the just Judgements of God upon Sacrilege; as you would appease his Wrath, avert his Vengeance, and draw down his Blessings from Heaven; as you reverence the Examples of the wisest, and best Men of all Ages, and Nations, from the Foundation of the World; and should blush to be outdone, to fall shamefully short of the worst; and above all, as you reverence the Example of God to his own People; and the Authority of your blessed Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus; reverence his Ordinance! Beware of Sacrilege! Beware of Covetousness, the Root of Sacrilege! Remember that dreadful Character of this Vice, recorded by the *Psalmist*, *The Covetous whom God abhorreth*. Remember God's own Declaration by the Mouth of his Prophet, that he *hateth Robbery, although it were for a burnt Offering*. (*Isa. lxi. 8.*) And much more must it be detestable to him, when its Motive is Fraud, Despite,
or

Country was harrassed with War, the regular Payment of Tythes from the Produce of the Earth, was often unavoidably interrupted: But as the Support of Religion, was as necessary, in the Seasons of War, as of Peace; whatever Damage was sustain'd by the Loss of Tythes, in the ordinary Way; was made up, as well as it could, from the Spoils of the Enemy. Although this Practice, in Process of Time, degenerated, as many others have done, into Superstitions in favour of particular Places and Temples.

or Enmity. Remember the great Christian Rule of Righteousness, *and do unto all Men, as ye would they should do unto you. Render therefore unto Cæsar, the Things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the Things that are God's.* So shall ye fulfil all Righteousness, and be inexcusable, if ye do not: *For he hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.* Micah vi. 8.

The E N D.

